27 Oct. 1966

Dear Miss McAlinden:

No. 1 - is indeed a crab-apple. The native crab-apple ranges from northern California to the Aleutians and is common west of the Cascades in Washington and Oregon. However, it has rather different shaped fruit, white petals, and usually rather pubescent to tomentose leaves, at least on the under surface. Hence, I suspect this is one of the introduced or hybrid crab-apples. There are very many species, varieties, or hybrids. I would hesitate to guess which. The dark pink flowers rule out some and the red fruit others. It might be, for example, be a hybrid between Pyrus floribunda, the showy crab-apple, and P. baccata, the Siberian crab-apple (Pyrus x. Arnoldiana), or one of many other hybrids. As for the value of the fruit, I would suggest the trial and error method. No apples to my knowledge are poisonous. Sample the fruit out of hand. If it is not too astringent, it probably would make good jelly.

No. 2 - is, on the other hand, from a very poisonous species, It is the leaf of a Datura, probably D. wrightii, which is common in California, and was used medicinally and ceremonially by some of the Indian tribes. It has narcotic principles like many members of the tobacco family, Solanaceae. Some of the Solanaceae, like the white potato, tomato, egg-plant, and a few others are quite harmless and of great value to man. Many of the others, particularly tobacco, are quite dangerous to man. Best not to tinker with either Datura or Nicotiana. If a smoker is bent on destorying his health, marijuana probably is less detrimental in the long run than tobacco, the claims of the tobacco industry notwithstanding. It has long astonished some of us botanists that the former is outlawed and the latter quite legal. Neither is recommended.

Sincerely,

Robert F. Thorne